

## Radical Right: Wrong and 'Soft'

By Sen. J. W. Fulbright

(These excerpts are taken from a recent speech here before the National War College by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.)

THERE has been considerable public and rather vitriolic discussion and controversy in recent weeks regarding a memorandum which I submitted to the President and to the Secretary of Defense concerning the sponsorship by military personnel of public meetings primarily devoted to highly controversial political issues. I have been more than a little surprised that this private memorandum has aroused such animated arguments about the involvement of the military in politics and above all has brought into question the principle of civilian control of the military establishment.

The appeal of certain ideas espoused by the radicals of the Right is not difficult to understand. To a nation beset by onerous challenges and responsibilities, they offer deceptively quick and simple solutions. They tell us that we have only to proclaim our dedication to "total victory" over world communism and to root out subversives—real and imaginary—at home and our problems will be solved. They tell us that our system of alliances and our military and economic commitments abroad are unnecessary and dangerous, that they somehow "play into the hands of the Communists."

Instead, they offer us clear and simple solutions—ringing declarations about foreigners and rooting out the disloyal at home. And those who disagree with them, they say, are "soft on communism."

IT SEEMS to me that it is these extremists who are advocating a "soft" approach. Their oversimplifications and their baseless generalizations reflect the "softness" of those who cannot bear to face the burdens of a continuing struggle against a powerful and resourceful enemy. A truly "tough" approach, in my judgment, is one which accepts the challenge of communism with the courage and determination to meet it with every instrumentality of foreign policy—political and economic as well as military, and with the willingness to see the struggle through as far into the future as may be necessary.

Those who seek to meet the challenge—or in reality, to evade it—by "bold" adventures abroad and witch hunts at home are the real devotees of "softness"—the "softness" of seeking escape from painful realities by resort to illusory panaceas.

The most astonishing of the propositions of the radical Right is their contention that the internal Communist menace is the primary problem of the cold war. They thus credit a wretched handful of Communists in the United States with greater power and influence than the Soviet Union and Communist China with their vast military and political power. I think that this viewpoint is patently absurd.

It reflects an amazing lack of confidence in the wisdom and good sense of the American people and in their ability to identify and reject Communist propaganda.

IMPLICIT in much of the propaganda of the radical Right is the assumption that our free society is permeated with corruption and decay. It is said, for example, that the schools and churches of this country are infiltrated with Communists. I recently received a propaganda sheet from an organization which calls itself "conservative" that declared among other things that "any member of Congress who votes for foreign aid should be defeated for participating in an act of treason."

I do not understand how an organization can be regarded as "conservative" that in effect charges the majority of the members of every Congress since World War II and three Presidents with "treason."

In a speech last week a prominent elected official denounced "Mr. Kennedy's bunch" of "muddle-minded advisers." Contending that our foreign assistance program aided the Communist cause, he assailed as "irresponsible elements" those who favor the independence of the emergent nations of the world. And he declared that it was "fatuous nonsense" for American foreign policy to take cognizance of "some nebulous thing we call world opinion."

The extremists of the Right call themselves conservative. In my judgment their views are not conservative, but radical—radical because they fail to distinguish between democratic social progress and totalitarian communism, regarding the former as a step toward the latter. The true conservative is one who wishes to conserve the historic values of our society.

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